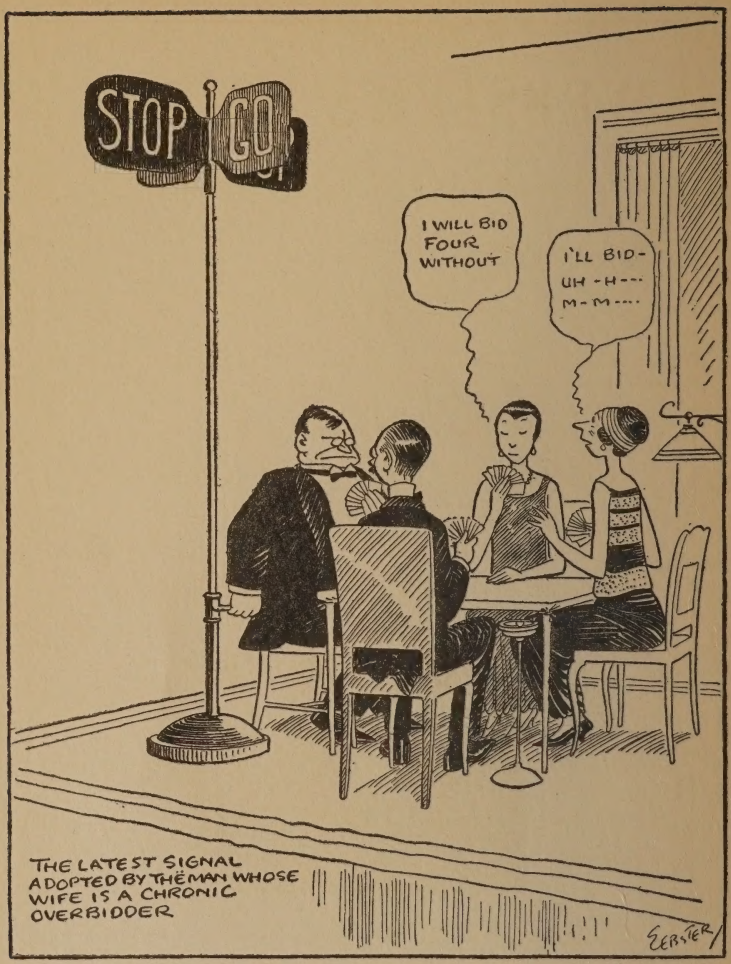
# WEBSTER'S BRIDGE

H·T·WEBSTER AND WILLIAM JOHNSTON

WEBSTER'S BRIDGE




THE LATEST SIGNAL ADOPTED BY THEMAN WHOSE WIFE IS A CHRONIC OVERBIDDER

# WEBSTER'S BRIDGE

*THIRTY-SIX CARTOONS*

BY

H. T. WEBSTER

*With Some Unsolicited Advice on*

*HOW NOT TO PLAY BRIDGE*

BY

WILLIAM JOHNSTON

NEW YORK
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MCMXXIV

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# FOREWORD

There have been many books written on how to play auction bridge. So far as I know never before has there been anything written on "How *Not* to Play Bridge."

The introduction of the double was a great improvement on the game. Mr. Wilbur C. Whitehead's more recent invention of the informatory *negative* double was a still greater improvement.

So I am hoping that what I have here written on how *not* to play bridge will have as much value, as what has been written on how to play it.

In any event Mr. H. T. Webster's humorous pictures in this little volume illustrate the evils of playing bridge badly and the violations of auction etiquette much more vividly and humanly than any mere words could do.

Any bridge player who looks at Webster's bridge pictures will laugh—and learn.

WILLIAM JOHNSTON.

*Knickerbocker Whist Club,*
26 West 40th Street, New York.

# EDITOR'S NOTE

BY

WILBUR C. WHITEHEAD

Author of "Auction Bridge Standards" and "Auction Bridge—Authoritative Leads"

The more one thinks about it the more it would strike one as extremely curious that with so many players better qualified to write on "How *not* to play auction," my friend William Johnston should be the first to do so.

When he asked me if I would edit this book—he has written many, this, however, being his first on auction—I was only too happy to do so. To edit a book, it should be understood, the editor is expected merely to go over it carefully, not with the idea of picking a quarrel with the author over any of his pet theories, but to make sure that he has said what he meant to say and not something else.

Although I may disagree with Mr. Johnston on some few of his viewpoints, such as his—in my opinion—excessive requirements for original club and diamond bids, the fact remains that "How *Not* to Play Bridge" is not only amusing but *sound in its fundamental principles,* something that cannot be said of many books on the game. And I've chuckled heartily over Webster's pictures.

W. C. WHITEHEAD.

# CONTENTS


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Why Do You Play Bridge? | 1 |
| II. | Which Kind of a Player Are You? | 5 |
| III. | If Married to Your Partner | 13 |
| IV. | Are You a Good Partner? | 19 |
| V. | About Original Bids | 25 |
| VI. | Bidding Second Hand | 31 |
| VII. | About the Third Hand | 37 |
| VIII. | Fourth Hand Bidding | 41 |
| IX. | A Bidding Streak | 45 |
| X. | Beware of Clubs | 49 |
| XI. | Watch Out for Diamonds | 51 |
| XII. | What Not to Lead | 57 |
| XIII. | The Business Double | 67 |
| XIV. | Informatory Doubling | 73 |
| XV. | The Hand-Hog | 79 |
| XVI. | About This Luck Thing | 83 |

PAGE

XVII. Freak Hands . . . . . 89

XVIII. About Signals . . . . . 93

XIX. Tricky Players . . . . . 97

XX. Some Pitfalls to Avoid . . . . . 101

XXI. Unforgivable Sins . . . . . 108

WEBSTER'S BRIDGE

IF WE LOOKED AND ACTED IN A BRIDGE GAME AS WE DO IN POKER —

# WEBSTER'S BRIDGE

## I

## WHY DO *YOU* PLAY BRIDGE?

AUCTION bridge is a game. Games are supposed to be played for amusement. If you find that bridge irritates you and makes you lose your temper, what do you play it for?

Maybe you took up the game expecting to make money at it. Don't! There are many easier ways of getting rich. Horse racing and oil stock are much surer.

But there is a good reason why bridge should be played by everybody. It is the one perfect test of what constitutes a lady or gentleman.

Bridge etiquette has no penalties attached to it. So your observance of the etiquette of auction is a guide to how well-bred you are.

You're neither a good bridge player nor a perfect lady——

If you fidget or scowl when your partner makes a lead you didn't expect or takes you out of a business double.

If when you shuffle the cards you fail to put them in the right place.

If you persist in peeping at the cards as they are dealt to you.

If you purposely hesitate before playing a card to mislead an opponent.

If when you are caught revoking you vociferously try to lie out of it.

If, after the hand is played, you volunteer unasked for and unwelcome advice on how your partner could have made another trick.

In fact, if you do any of these things, you shouldn't be allowed to play bridge. There is only one thing worse—standing or sitting around a game you are not in, and criticizing the various plays. If you do that—well, it's too bad they gave up burning people alive. Some folks still need it.

Remember, bridge, like golf, is a game to be played, not talked about.

There's nothing more boring than to have some one tell you in detail how he played a four-trump hand day before yesterday.

Play bridge—don't talk it.

HA-RA-A-AFF!
AWFF-F-FPH!
HA-WAFM!
THE DUMMY WHO, WHEN HE SEES HIS PARTNER START TO LEAD A CARD IN THE OPPONENTS' SUIT, COUGHS VIGOROUSLY
WEBSTER

THE CARD TABLE

## II

## WHICH KIND OF A PLAYER ARE *YOU?*

If you have been playing bridge for any length of time you will have discovered that there are several different kinds of *bad* bridge players. Have you ever taken the trouble to analyze your own game and see which kind of a player *you* are?

The six kinds of bad players I have run across are——

*The Dub*—She has an idea that rules are unimportant. "All you have to do to win at bridge is to use your common sense," is one of her pet phrases. She has heard of the "rule of eleven" but never could get it through her head. She is always asking what is trump, and pays no attention to her partner's signals.

She'll tell you confidentially that Mah Jongg is a much better game than bridge. She's right. For her it is.

It takes brains to make a good bridge player.

*The Gab*—She looks upon a bridge game solely as an excuse for conversation. Just when you are

trying to remember how many trumps have been played she begins describing somebody's new gown. She starts telling about her latest operation right in the middle of the game. She never knows what the score is nor whose turn it is to play nor whether she is dealing with the red or the blue cards.

She may get some fun out of the game herself but none of the other three players do.

*The Scold*—She thinks she was born to rule the world and that she knows more about bridge than Whitehead, Work and Florence Irwin combined. No matter what her partner does, she never is suited and scowlingly tells what card in her opinion should have been played.

If she overbids and her partner gets set two tricks doubled, she loses her temper and talks like a fishwife. If she happens to revoke she indignantly denies it, and if convicted is sure to insist that it was dummy's fault for not asking her about it.

A player of this type can ruin an otherwise pleasant afternoon for anybody.

*The Skin*—She's out to make money out of the game. She always wants to play for a bigger stake than the rest of the players. She keeps an eagle eye on the score and is a martinet at enforcing penalties.

DON'T LET THAT BOTHER YOU. I'M USED TO INDIFFERENT PLAYERS
YOU'LL HAVE TO OVERLOOK MY PLAYING, PARTNER. I'M NOT VERY GOOD. WHAT ARE THE VALUES? DO CLUBS COUNT 8 OR 10? TO SAVE MY LIFE I CAN'T REMEMBER
WHAT DO I LEAD? MY 4TH HIGHEST? BUT I HAVEN'T ANYTHING HIGHER THAN A JACK. YOU WOULDN'T CALL THAT HIGH WOULD YOU?
I LEAD YOU 4 DECLARATIVE CARDS! DOESN'T THAT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?
I TOOK THAT TRICK WITH THE ACE AND LEAD YOU THE THREE WHICH SHOULD INDICATE TO ANY ONE OF AVERAGE INTELLIGENCE THAT I HAD NO MORE DIAMONDS!
OH, MY G - - !! WHY ON EARTH DIDN'T YOU SAVE A REENTRY CARD?
IS THIS NO TRUMPS? WHY I THOUGHT SPADES WERE TRUMP!
EBSTER

Her favorite pastime is to arrange a set game when she has a partner who thoroughly understands her game, and their opponents are some beginning bridge players.

Her ambition in life is to make the game pay her rent. A partner whose playing causes her to lose a few hundred points arouses her enmity.

If a player of this type had a little more courage or a little more capital she'd be running a bucket-shop.

*The Brash*—He is always over-optimistic. If he has no good cards in his own hand, he takes it for granted that his partner must have them.

One of the worst of this sort I ever knew when he dealt and discovered that he had a bad hand always promptly bid two no-trump. He argued that it drove the opponents to three bids and made it easier to set them. Generally, however, they would double his two no-trump and his innocent partner would be set several hundred points.

Brash players are always doubling the opponents' bids, figuring on two tricks in their partner's hands. Watch out for them. They'll cost you a lot of points.

*The No-Bid*—There's nothing worse than having an over-confident partner, except having one that is

too timid to bid. Once in a while you run across players who with three aces and four of the suit you have bid, sit still and say "no bid." When they are sure of setting their opponents at least two tricks, they are afraid to double.

You can't ever win games and rubbers at auction unless you bid when you have the cards. A "no-bid" partner is ruinous.

PRECIOUS, WON'T YOU RECITE THE PIECE YOU ARE GOING TO SPEAK AT THE CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENT? PLEASE, DEAR. DO IT FOR MAMA!
OH, WE'D LOVE TO HEAR IT! I KNOW MR. TEWKSBURY WOULD LOVE IT TOO.
PLEASE RECITE IT FOR US, MARGE! I JUST KNOW IT WILL BE TOO CUTE FOR WORDS
MR. TEWKSBURY HAS JUST BID 6 WITHOUT DOUBLED AND RE-DOUBLED
EBSTER

## III

## IF MARRIED TO YOUR PARTNER

THERE is one peculiar situation that frequently arises at the bridge table, which no book on auction hitherto issued gives any rules for—that is when husband and wife happen to cut each other as partners.

No American couple ever has satisfactorily settled the question as to which is the better bridge player. The battle is renewed each time husbands and wives play together.

If there is no practical way of avoiding having a husband and wife play together, these rules should be strictly observed:

A husband, *having his wife as a partner,* should—

a. Treat her as politely as he would the cook or his stenographer.

b. Conceal that pained look at a wrong lead behind a poker face.

c. Wait until after the guests are gone to tell his wife what he thinks of her.

A wife, *having her husband as a partner,* should—

a. Remember that letting a man support you doesn't give you the right to insult him.

b. Be as sweet when your husband makes an error in play as you would be to a feminine opponent in an afternoon game.

c. Take it for granted that the man you married still has as much common sense as when he selected you as his wife.

Harsh as these rules may seem, anyone who ever has played bridge against a husband and wife will realize the importance and necessity of them.

ALBERT, WHO IS WILLIAM JOHNSTON? I SEE A STUB HERE IN YOUR CHECK BOOK THAT SHOWS YOU PAID HIM ON OCTOBER FIFTEENTH ONE HUN-DRED AND FORTY EIGHT DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS. WHAT WAS THAT FOR?
WHY, SWEETIE, THAT WAS - AH - AH - UM - M - WHY - AH - H - I - I - DON'T RECALL THAT AT ALL. LEMME SEE IT, PLEASE
THE PATHETIC STALL FOR TIME -
EEMSTERY

NO USE PLAYIN' 'EM. WE'VE GOT 'EM ALL. GIVE US A LITTLE SLAM
YES, I KNOW. BUT LET'S PLAY 'EM ANYWAY
SET YOU THREE! THAT'S A TRIFLE DIFFERENT FROM A LITTLE SLAM - WHAT?
EBSTER

## IV

## ARE YOU A GOOD PARTNER?

BRIDGE is essentially a partnership game. You may play your best but if you have a partner that always throws you, you will lose a lot of points.

In bridge the greatest asset you can possibly have is a thoroughly dependable partner.

The qualifications of a good partner are:—

You can bank on his original bids. If he says "one diamond" you can rely on his being able to take two tricks if you lead him that suit.

If you bid two spades over a no trump you can be sure that his first lead will be his highest spade if he has two, or a little one if he has three or four to an honor.

You can depend on a good partner never to make original bids on king-jack suits, never to bid "two hearts" as an original bid when he has six or seven to the queen.

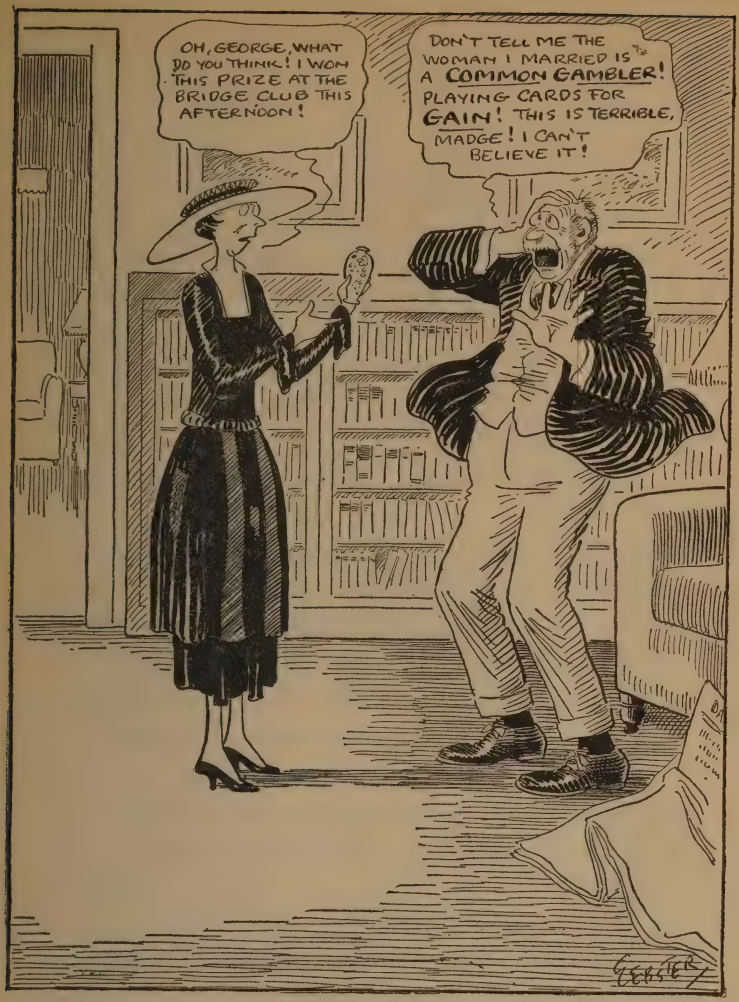
A good partner always heeds your signals and leads you the suit you call for at the first opportunity.

If he bids an original no trump, you may know that he has as good as three aces or *at least* three suits amply stopped.

If you have a dependable partner and he makes a shut-out bid of four spades, you need not worry even if you haven't a spade in your hand.

Dependable partners, however, rarely make shut-out bids in either clubs or diamonds, unless well able to go game with average help *or less* from partner. What's the use?

HERE'S A JAZZ THAT'LL KNOCK YA FOR A ROW OF ARTIC IGLOOS! LISSEN TO THIS!
FADER HAS A PEEZNISS - STRICTLY SECOND HA-AND - EVERY TING FROM TOOTPICKS UP TO PABY
GRA-ANDS!
- SO MADGE WALKS RIGHT UP TO HIM AND SHE SAYS - SAY, YOU BIG, OVERGROWN, FINALE HOPPING MORON —
HAW-HAW-HAW-HAW, HAW!
HAR-HAR! PRETTY GOOD! PRETTY GOOD! I'LL BROADCAST IT TO TH' WORLD THA'S PRETTY RICH! HAW-HAW!
TRYING TO REMEMBER IF THE 9 OF SPADES HAS BEEN PLAYED
WEBSTER


OH, GEORGE, WHAT DO YOU THINK! I WON THIS PRIZE AT THE BRIDGE CLUB THIS AFTERNOON!
DON'T TELL ME THE WOMAN I MARRIED IS A COMMON GAMBLER! PLAYING CARDS FOR GAIN! THIS IS TERRIBLE, MADGE! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
GEBLER

## V

## ABOUT ORIGINAL BIDS

If you want to be a good bridge player, the first thing to do each morning when you get up is to look at yourself in the glass and say aloud:—

"What is the purpose of making an original bid?"

If you ask yourself this question often enough you will presently come to realize that there is only one correct answer to this question—divided into two parts.

First—I make an original bid because I believe that with average help from my partner I can make my contract, and possibly go game.

Second—While this hand is not strong enough in itself to go game I want my partner to know that if he leads me the suit I mention I can in all probability take at least two tricks.

Frequently you will find a poor player who will make a weak original bid and then attempt to defend it by saying—

"Partner, I was trying to save game." That's tommyrot. You can't expect to win every game of bridge. If you have a bad hand, take your medi-

cine and be hopeful that the next deal will bring you some aces and kings.

Over-bidding a weak hand only deceives your partner and is apt to get you set, and make you lose several hundred points on the rubber.

When you have finished dealing, study your hand to see whether it is an offensive or a defensive hand. Consider what may happen if you bid a heart or a spade and the other side doubles.

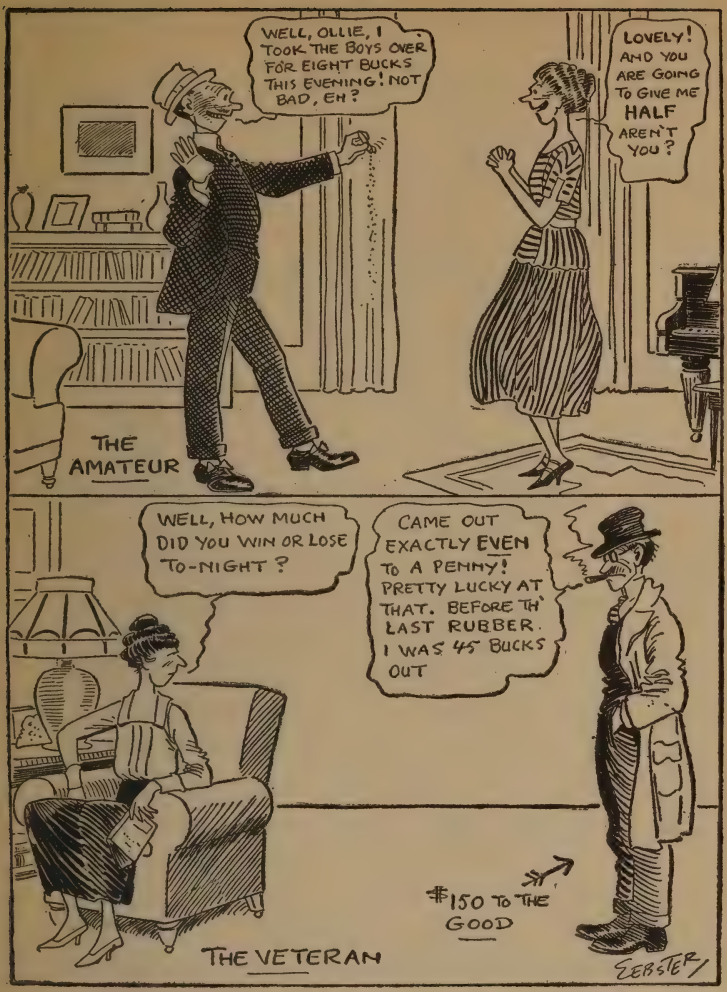
Unless you see a chance to go game, give your partner whatever reliable information you can, then sit back and wait to see what happens.

Don't ever, when you are dealer, bid initially a long suit without the tops, unless it is backed up heavily with aces and kings of other suits. Unless your partner has a bid, you can't do much with it anyhow. Suppose you have six spades to the queen, if he bids no trump you have an ideal "take out." If he indicates that he has some sure tricks in clubs or diamonds, bid your six spades to the queen on the second round, if you have an outside trick to back them up or are blank in the suit he mentioned.

And one thing more—don't ever bid no trump if you can make an honest bid of a major suit.

"No trumps" are the hardest to make. Never bid them if you can bid a major suit legitimately.

I'M TRYING TO GET UP A COUPLE OF TABLES OF BRIDGE, DO YOU PLAY?
I PLAY AT IT! HAW! HAW!
PARDON ME, BUT DO YOU PLAY BRIDGE? I'M TRYING TO –
YES, IF YOU CAN CALL IT THAT, HA-HA-HA!
YOU PLAY BRIDGE OF COURSE, MISS KWEEL?
I ADORE IT BUT I PLAY A PERFECTLY WRETCHED GAME
DO YOU PLAY BRIDGE, MRS. AMPLE?
OH, DEAH NO! I MERELY PLAY AT IT!
DO YOU PLAY BRIDGE?
YES!
I NOT ONLY PLAY BRIDGE BUT I PLAY THE BEST —!! -☆- ⊛ — GAME IN THIS CITY!
CLEBSTER


WELL, OLLIE, I TOOK THE BOYS OVER FOR EIGHT BUCKS THIS EVENING! NOT BAD, EH?
LOVELY! AND YOU ARE GOING TO GIVE ME HALF AREN'T YOU?
THE AMATEUR
WELL, HOW MUCH DID YOU WIN OR LOSE TO-NIGHT?
CAME OUT EXACTLY EVEN TO A PENNY! PRETTY LUCKY AT THAT. BEFORE TH' LAST RUBBER. I WAS 45 BUCKS OUT
$150 TO THE GOOD
THE VETERAN
EBSTER

## VI

## BIDDING SECOND HAND

THERE are many fairly good bridge players who fail to recognize what a wonderfully strategic position the second hand is.

Suppose the dealer bids "no trump," and the second hand sits there with six spades or six hearts to the ace-king. Many foolish players rush right in and bid the suit, but it is a great mistake. As likely as not their partner will be blank in that suit and they will go down a trick or two.

What if there is no other bidding and the dealer plays his no trump. If second hand opens his long suit there is little likelihood of the dealer going game. You stand a good chance of taking five or six tricks, and, if your partner has anything at all, of setting your opponents a trick or two.

What if the dealer's partner bids two in one of the minor suits. There's still plenty of time to mention your spades or hearts without increasing the contract.

Or suppose your own partner mentions a minor suit. That will give you all the more confidence in bidding *on the second round* if you know your partner has something.

But if you are second hand and decide to bid, make sure that in addition to the suit you bid you have what is known as a "get in,"—an ace, or a king-queen in another suit, so that in case the other side go on with their no-trump, and you fail to establish your suit on the first two or three rounds, you can get back in and lead it again.

Second-hand, too, is a favorite position for doubling, but we'll talk about that later. So many people double these days without having genuine doubles that the subject needs a chapter or two all by itself.

OF COURSE HE GUMMED THE HAND BY DISCARDING HIS 6 OF SPADES ON THE LAST TRICK
STRANGE HE HESITATES ABOUT IT - HIS PARTNER ECHOED
YEAH, HE SHOULD HAVE DISCARDED HIS TREY OF HEARTS
I'D LIKE TO BE PLAYING THAT HAND I'LL BET I COULD MAKE A LITTLE SLAM OUT OF IT WITH MY EYES SHUT
THERE'S JUST ONE CARD FOR HIM TO LEAD - IF HE DOESN'T LEAD THAT HE GETS SET 4 TRICKS
UH - UH! NOT THAT ONE!
LEASTER

THE GALLERY

TWO PEOPLE ABOUT TO START FOR AN EVENING OF RELAXATION AT THE HOME OF TWO BRIDGE SHARKS

## VII

## ABOUT THE THIRD HAND

MANY hours spent over the bridge table have convinced me that the chief function of third-hand is to "take out" the dealer of whatever he has bid.

If the dealer bids no-trump, I have found that it pays to take him out under these circumstances:

Whenever I have a singleton of any suit.

Whenever I have five of a major suit or six of a minor to a high honor.

Of course there come times when third hand will hold a regular Yarborough without a single trick in it, and the only thing to be done then is to keep quiet. Any bid you make under those circumstances increases the contract, deceives your partner and doubles the likelihood of getting set.

There are some bridge authorities these days who oppose the take-out in spades or hearts, unless you have enough honors to have warranted an original bid. Personally I do not agree with them.

Most players these days are bidding an original no trump on rather weak cards. If you are third

hand with five spades or hearts, take them out and make sure they mean it. If they go back to no trump, despite your warning that you'd rather play a major suit, it's up to them.

But make it your invariable rule to take out on something if you have a singleton, unless such take-out would deceive your partner and leave him in worse shape than if you said nothing. Most people bid an original no-trump on three suits well-stopped. If you have a singleton, that may be the very suit in which they, too, are shy. Second-hand very likely is sitting back, with seven of them to the ace-king-queen, gleefully waiting to set you.

But no rule can be absolute. Sometimes when your partner bids no-trump you have a lot of aces and kings yourself. Use your common sense then, and try to figure out what he has in his hand to warrant a bid. Sometimes under those circumstances, you can take a chance of leaving him in, even if you have a singleton in some suit.

ALICE, WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO MAKE A FOURTH AT BRIDGE? YOU AND I WILL BE PARTNERS
OH, MR. FOSKETT, I PLAY SO POORLY! I'D BE SCARED TO DEATH PLAYING WITH A SHARK LIKE YOU!
HA-HA-HA-A-A! DON'T YOU LOVE IT? SHE CALLED GEORGE A SHARK! IMAGINE!
EBSTER

## VIII

## FOURTH HAND BIDDING

THE fourth hand in the deal is no place for an optimist.

There's one maxim that every bridge player ought to keep constantly before him in big letters, and say it aloud three times a week. Here it is:

Never start the bidding fourth hand unless with no more than average help from partner you are certain you can go game.

To bid at all you ought to be two sure tricks stronger than you would need to for an original bid by dealer.

Your partner, by not bidding, has already told you he has nothing in his hand worth mentioning.

And if you are going to make an original bid fourth hand, by all means bid a suit, if you can, rather than a no-trump.

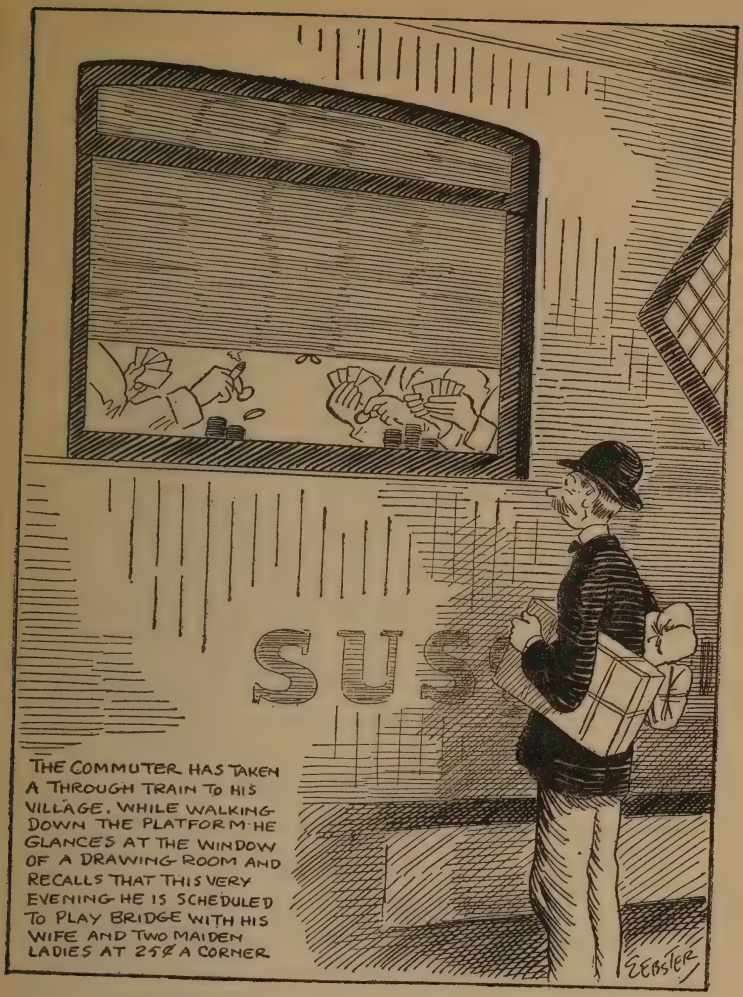
Consider, before you bid, what is going to happen if one of your opponents doubles for a bid. Is there any suit they could go to, that would leave you in a hole.

Generally when three hands have made no bid, the cards are so distributed that game is not possible for anyone.

Fourth hand is a bad place to double a dealer's no-trump, too. If he goes two no-trump, all you have done is to give him information as to where the strong cards lie.

The best advice that can be given about fourth-hand bidding can be summed up in a slight paraphrase of a famous political saying:

Step softly OR carry a big stick!




THE COMMUTER HAS TAKEN A THROUGH TRAIN TO HIS VILLAGE. WHILE WALKING DOWN THE PLATFORM HE GLANCES AT THE WINDOW OF A DRAWING ROOM AND RECALLS THAT THIS VERY EVENING HE IS SCHEDULED TO PLAY BRIDGE WITH HIS WIFE AND TWO MAIDEN LADIES AT 25¢ A CORNER

## IX

## A BIDDING STREAK

EVERY once in a while players, even fairly good players, get what is known as a bidding streak.

Time after time they will overbid their hands, each time getting set. The higher the score gets to be against them, the more desperately they will bid, trying vainly to win the rubber.

So far as I am aware, no successful way has ever been discovered of curing partners of these terrible bidding streaks.

All a partner can do under such circumstances is keep his temper if he can, and keep quiet even when he has aces and king strength in his own hand.

If you give a man in a bidding streak the slightest encouragement he goes mad. He immediately imagines that you must have all the aces in the pack.

If your opponents have made a spade bid, and it has been doubled, and you, being blank in spades bid on six clubs to the queen, to deny spades, a part-

ner in a bidding streak is just as likely to carry you to four clubs. The fact that clubs is the cheapest suit means nothing, you can go down as many points in clubs as you can in spades.

Make a practice of studying the kind of bidding your partners do. When you find a dependable partner, sing a hymn of thanksgiving.

If you get hooked up with a partner addicted to bidding streaks, the best advice I know is to take a correspondence course in temper control.

They're terrible—and incurable.

YES, BUT I DIDN'T MAKE A FREE BID. MINE WAS A SECONDARY BID
IF YOU HAD PLAYED THE PENULTIMATE YOU WOULD HAVE MADE AN EXTRA TRICK
I WAS WRONG IN PLAYING MY MINOR TENACE INSTEAD OF THE MAJOR
I SHOULD THINK YOU WOULD HAVE MADE A PRE-EMPTIVE BID WITH THAT HAND. IT WAS ALMOST A PIANOLA
YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE IT BUT LAST WEEK I HELD A YARBOROUGH THREE TIMES IN ONE EVENING
A WHAT!
NOTE – THE DEFINITION OF YARBOROUGH IS – A HAND WHICH CONTAINS NO CARD HIGHER THAN NINE
EBSTER

# X

## BEWARE OF THE CLUBS

THERE are four suits in each pack of cards, and the most dangerous suit of all is clubs.

If you try to make a game in clubs you have to take five tricks, and then it only counts thirty.

On the other hand, if you get set in three clubs doubled it costs you just as much as if you had been spades or no trump.

If you are the dealer and find five clubs to the ace-king in your hand and nothing else, don't mention them. They're worth mighty little to you unless you have another ace or a king-queen in your hand. Then you can cautiously say "one club," hoping your partner may want to try a no-trump.

If dealing and you find six clubs to the king-jack, even if you have a trick in some other suit, sit still and wait.

*Never, never, never* bid a king-jack suit of any sort as an opening bid, no matter what its length.

Generally you'll get a chance to bid them later, and if you don't you probably are lucky that you didn't get a chance to make the bid.

THANK HEAVEN I DON'T HAVE TO GO OUT ON A ROTTEN NIGHT LIKE THIS! THE LITTLE OLD CASTLE LOOKS PRETTY GOOD TO ME RIGHT NOW
I GUESS I'VE GOT ENOUGH BOOKS TO LAST ME THROUGH THE EVENING
AND ENOUGH TOBACCO
AH-H-H!
WASN'T DOING A THING - JUST READING. YOU SAY YOU'VE GOT THREE? FINE! SAME OLD TENTH OF A CENT! S'POSE. I'LL BE RIGHT OVER
WEBSTER

## XI

# WATCH OUT FOR DIAMONDS

DIAMONDS, like clubs, are more to be talked about than played.

It seldom pays to make a diamond bid, expecting to play them, unless you are something on the score.

Never bid diamonds or any other suit originally unless you have the tops of the suit.

Even if you read in a bridge book that "with six diamonds in your hand to the queen-jack, you should make an original bid of two diamonds," don't you believe it.

They quit doing that about the time that nullos were born and died.

Be mighty careful, too, about attempting a shut-out bid in diamonds even if you have seven or eight of them with four honors solid. If all the diamonds are bunched in your hands, it means that somebody else has the spades and hearts. Very likely it is your opponents.

Suppose you bid four diamonds right off. What are you going to do if the other side goes four hearts or four spades? Always look before you leap into a shut-out bid.

Diamond honors are useful in helping your partner make a no-trump bid. The ace and king of diamonds generally each take a trick.

But many a woman has lost many a rubber because she couldn't resist the temptation to keep on bidding diamonds or clubs.

OH, CHESTER, I'M SO GLAD YOU'VE GIVEN UP THAT HORRID POKER GAME! 50 CENT LIMIT WAS TOO MUCH LIKE GAMBLING. YOU CAN'T AFFORD IT. NOW, YOUR LITTLE BRIDGE GAME AT 5 CENTS A POINT IS REASONABLE - YOU QUIT EARLY AND YOU CAN'T LOSE BUT A FEW CENTS. IT'S A GENTLEMAN'S PASTIME NOT A LOW GAMBLING GAME
YEAH, THA'S RIGHT
CHESTER HAS JUST BEEN HOOKED FOR $89.00 IN AUCTION AT 5 CENTS A POINT
EBSTER

I SEE WHERE TH' PRESIDENT'S WIFE IS QUITE DOMESTIC - DARNS HER HUSBAND'S SOCKS AN' SEWS ON HIS BUTTONS
WELL, HOW ARE YOU GOING TO KILL TH' AFTERNOON?
MARGE AND I ARE GOING TO THE MATINEE - THEN WE'RE GOING TO GRACE'S AND PLAY A FEW ROBBERS OF BRIDGE, I'LL BE HOME BY SEVEN
BY TH' WAY, I NOTICE A COUPLA BUTTONS MISSING FROM THIS SUIT OF UNDERWEAR
AN' THERE'S A BUTTON SHY ON THIS SHIRT!
JUSSA MINUTE BEFORE YOU GO - LOOK AT TH' HOLE IN THIS SOCK!
WELL, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! WHY DON'T YOU PUT ON ANOTHER PAIR? IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE? ANYONE WOULD THINK YOU OWNED ONE SHIRT, ONE SUIT OF UNDERWEAR AND ONE PAIR OF SOCKS!
EASTER

## XII

## WHAT NOT TO LEAD

ANYBODY who plays bridge at all these days ought not to have much difficulty in knowing which cards to lead. The leads have become pretty well standardized, and if you don't wish to have your partner "talk at you" for leading the wrong card, all that is necessary for you to do is to go to any book store and buy a Whitehead's "Authoritative Leads."

What *not* to lead is infinitely more important, but there has been very little written about it. There are few bridge players whose game will not be helped by avoiding some of the "worst leads" that follow:

*Never lead away from an ace.* Did you ever stop to ask yourself what good such a foolish lead does anybody? Your opponent, looking at dummy and his own hand, knows that he hasn't it. Your partner knows he hasn't it. As you haven't led it, and it isn't in dummy, he takes it for granted your opponent must have it. Your partner is the only person you

are fooling. And frequently when you underlead, or lead away from an ace, you never do get a chance to make it. By the time you get around to playing it somebody may trump it.

This of course applied only when you are playing a suit. In no-trump you generally underlead an ace, if you are lucky enough to have one. If in a trump declaration you've got ace and one, it sometimes pays to lead out your ace, but generally it is better to lead another suit.

*Beware of the doubleton lead.* Nothing is more annoying or confusing to a partner than to have you lead him the top card of a doubleton. He tries to count up from the pips on the card to see what you are leading from and gives it up. He decides it must have been a singleton. He returns your lead expecting you to trump it, and instead your opponent gets in and goes game before you can stop him. Not only do you lose the game, but your partner thinks a lot of hard things about you, *and sometimes he says them right to your face.*

*Be careful about singletons.* The singleton lead is coming more and more into disfavor. Sometimes it is profitable, but the objection to it is, that right away it enables your opponent to place all the cards in that suit. The longer you can keep an opponent

MABEL, I'M HAVING A FEW FRIENDS IN TOMORROW AFTERNOON TO MEET NANCY FAY. SHE'S A WONDERFUL BRIDGE PLAYER. I'LL HAVE TWO TABLES. DO YOU KNOW FIVE MORE GOOD PLAYERS?
WELL, THERE'S ALICE OATMEAL - NO - SHE OVERBIDS - AND BESS DOOFUSS - NO - SHE BIDS A MINOR SUIT TO INVITE A NO TRUMPER
YOU MIGHT ASK MAUDE HOOPLAH - NO - I'M WRONG! MAUDE SAYS - "I WISH I COULD RE-DOUBLE AGAIN". YOU COULDN'T ASK NANCY TO PLAY WITH A WOMAN WHO DOES THAT
SUPPOSE YOU ASK CLARA WHAFM? NO - CLARA'S ONE OF THESE PLAYERS WHO TRIES TO PLAY EVERY HAND. SHE'S IMPOSSIBLE. I'M SURE NANCY WOULDN'T CARE TO MEET HER
PERHAPS HELEN KOOKOO — NO - HELEN FORGETS TO RETURN HER PARTNER'S LEAD AND THE DISCARDS MEAN NOTHING IN HER YOUNG LIFE. I SHOULDN'T ASK HER TO MEET ANYONE I REALLY CARED ABOUT
AMY BATHMATTE MIGHT — NO - AMY BIDS FOURTH HAND WHEN SHE HAS ONLY TWO SURE TRICKS. I WOULDN'T INSULT NANCY BY INVITING A WOMAN OF THAT CHARACTER
I KNOW WHAT I'LL DO! I'LL HAVE A MATINEE PARTY. WE'LL GO SEE QUIVVERING SOULS - JUST THE THREE OF US
LOVELY!

guessing about where the cards are the more likely you are to defeat him.

*Lead your partner's suit.* Many players sitting on the second hand of the dealer, have an annoying habit of trying to establish their own suit instead of leading the one their partner has bid. This is especially true if the dealer has bid two no-trump over a fourth-hand suit bid.

Remember, the reason your partner bid was because he wanted and expected you to lead him what he called for. The dealer may have the suit stopped once, or possibly twice, but if it is led, the chances are your partner has "get-in" cards enough to establish it eventually.

Of course if you have a set-up suit in your own hand against a two-no trumper, that is six or seven to the ace-king-queen, jump right in and lead them first, but unless you have, lead what your partner asked you to.

Why take a plunge in the dark? If you lead your own weak suit, instead of his, very likely you are headed for disaster. Be nice to your partner and do what he asks you to.

It used to be the practice when leading to your partner a suit that he called for, invariably to lead him the highest of his suit that you happened to have

in your hand. Recently it has been discovered by the experts that it generally works out better, *if you have three or four of his suit to an honor,* to lead him the lowest, and let him lead it back to you. This is especially advisable in playing against a no-trump declaration.

And last of all, and this is primer class stuff,

Don't lead out all your aces and kings right off the reel. They are valuable "key cards." As long as you have them in your hand, you have a wonderful control. The sooner your opponent finds out where the aces and kings are, the better he can plan his game.

OH, IS IT MY LEAD? I BEG YOUR PARDON! I THOUGHT IT WAS — YES, YOU'RE RIGHT - IT'S MY LEAD. HM-M-M —
YES, IT'S YOUR LEAD!
HM-M - LE'S SEE NOW - UH - NO, THAT WON'T DO-- HM-M- WELL, NOW, AH — —
HM-M! DEALER BID A SPADE AND EVERYONE PASSED. HM! AND IT'S MY LEAD ISN'T IT? WELL, NOW, LEMME LOOK THIS OVER A MINUTE - HM-M
SPADES ARE TRUMP AND MY PARTNER PASSED- HM-M - NOW, LE'S SEE - M-M-M- AH-H - JUST A MINUTE, NOW — —
THAT WAS AN AWFULLY COMICAL MURDER THAT TOOK PLACE AT THE WHIST CLUB LAST NIGHT, AL A MAN SHOT DOWN LIKE A DOG FOR BEING SO SLOW IN PLAYING
YEAH, THAT WAS ONE OF THE FUNNIEST MURDERS I EVER HEARD OF. I'VE BEEN LAUGHING EVER SINCE I READ ABOUT IT

NOW, GEORGE, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, DO TRY AND PLAY A SANE GAME OF BRIDGE TO-NIGHT! BE CONSERVATIVE IN YOUR BIDDING! WHEN YOU BID COUNT THE TRICKS YOU ARE GOING TO LOSE! THE BROWNS ARE EXPERT PLAYERS - REMEMBER THAT
PST!
I ADD A JIGGER OF PINEAPPLE JUICE. HELPS A LOT
HERE'S TO CRIME!
DOWN TH' HATCH!
NONSENSE! I'VE HAD FIVE M'SELF! I'LL SHAKE UP SOME MORE'N A MINUTE
NO! NO! BILL! I'VE HAD FOUR ALREADY! WHUP! THA'S PLENTY! WOW!
I'LL SAY SIX SPADES! WHAD'YA THINK OF THAT? AN' I HAVEN'T MUCH OF A HAND EITHER
RE-DOUBLE!
I'LL DOUBLE!
EBSTER

## XIII

## THE BUSINESS DOUBLE

MORE rubbers at auction have probably been lost by foolish doubles than for any other cause.

Doubling is trying to outguess the fellow who is doing the bidding, and the chances are he is as good a guesser as you are. Besides the bidder always has the advantage of you. He knows what he has in his hand and you don't.

Suppose he has bid three spades. You're sitting there with the ace of spades, the ace-king of hearts and the ace-king of diamonds. Your partner has put in a club bid. You count up the sure tricks in your own hand, five, and consider that your partner having made a bid has probably a trick or two in clubs. It looks safe, so you confidently announce "I double."

But wait a minute. STOP and THINK. Why did the bidder go to *three* spades, when he didn't even have the ace? The chances are he has seven or eight spades, and no diamonds whatever. That

ace and king of diamonds that you counted as sure tricks turn out to be just mere decorations. And your partner, it turns out, was bidding on six clubs to the queen-jack.

Frequently in just such cases as this the bidder makes his contract doubled, with sometimes an extra trick or two.

So here's a rule you will not find in any bridge book, but it's a good one:

*Before announcing a business double, try to put yourself in the other fellow's place.*

Try to picture his hand to see if you can conjecture what the situation is that makes him bid so confidently. And keep in mind that though "chicane" doesn't count any more in the score, it frequently doubles the strength of a hand.

Another thing about business doubles—*be careful whom you double.*

Some players are conservative, always making sound bids. Beware of doubling them, they're apt to make it.

But there are players who try to combine poker and bridge, who are always flag-flying and game-saving—they're the ones that it pays to double.

But be cautious about doubling when the bidding gets up to five or six. That always means that there

YOU PLAY BRIDGE OF COURSE?
YES INDEED. WE HAVE A LITTLE CLUB IN OUR TOWN AND I PLAY EVERY SATURDAY. MY WIFE SAYS I'M A SHARK AT IT BUT —
THEN YOU'LL APPRECIATE THIS HAND I WATCHED THE OTHER NIGHT AT MY CLUB. WE'LL CALL THE PLAYERS A, B, Y AND Z. A HOLDS THE QUEEN, 6 AND 5 OF HEARTS, THE KING, QUEEN AND 7 OF CLUBS, THE 8 OF DIAMONDS AND THE 4 OF SPADES. B HOLDS THE 10 OF CLUBS, THE QUEEN, 6 AND 3 OF DIAMONDS, —
- THE KING, JACK, 10 AND 7 OF SPADES. Y HOLDS THE 8 AND 7 OF HEARTS, THE ACE, 8 AND 2 OF CLUBS AND THE QUEEN, 8 AND 6 OF SPADES. Z HOLDS THE 4 AND 3 OF CLUBS, THE 10, 7 AND 5 OF DIAMONDS AND THE ACE, 5 AND 2 OF SPADES. THERE ARE NO TRUMPS AND Z LEADS THE 10 OF DIAMONDS —
- AND Y DISCARDS THE 8 OF SPADES. NO OTHER OPENING AND NO OTHER DISCARD WOULD DO. IF Y DISCARDS THE 6 OF SPADES, B ALLOWS THE 10 OF DIAMONDS TO HOLD, WHICH FORCES Z TO SHIFT TO CLUBS AND FORCES Y TO LET B WIN WITH THE 10. THE QUEEN AND ANOTHER DIAMOND THROWS Z BACK INTO THE LEAD. WHEN Z LEADS THE SPADE, B WINS WHATEVER Y PLAYS.-
- AND FORCES THE ACE OF SPADES, GIVING A A CLUB OR A HEART OR B 2 SPADES. Z LEADS THE SMALL SPADE, B WINS IT. Z WINS THE NEXT TRICK AND A HAS TO DISCARD, GIVING Y 2 TRICKS. IF B DOESN'T LEAD THE 3RD DIAMOND Y AND Z MUST MAKE 2 SPADES, A CLUB AND A DIAMOND — ETC., ETC., ETC.
HELLO, JIM! WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FOURTH AT BRIDGE. HOW ABOUT YOU?
THANKS. I DON'T PLAY TH' GAME!
Y
10
Z
2
4
5
B
Q
8
7
A
K
LEBSTER

is a freak distribution of cards. The aces and kings you expect to take tricks with often prove valueless. Practically every hand that is bid up to five or six is a three-suiter, sometimes only a two-suiter.

The very best rule about business doubles to be always observed by the average player is this:

DON'T.

WHEW! SOME HEAT! ME FOR TH' LIL OL' SHOWER WHEN I GET HOME, I'LL SLIP ON MY THIN SILK PYJAMAS AN' SIT ON TH' BACK PORCH ALL EVENING. WE ALWAYS GET A BREEZE THERE
WHO'S THIS? ARTHUR ROCHE? NOPE! NO POKER FOR ME, ART, WILD HORSES COULDN'T DRAG ME INTO A CARD GAME ON A HOT NIGHT LIKE THIS!
IMAGINE PLAYIN' CARDS IN THIS HOT WEATHER! ART SURE DOES LOVE HIS POKER!
SAY, BILL, RAY LONG'S GONNA HAVE A LITTLE GAME TO-NIGHT AN'—
NOT FOR ME! NOT IN THIS WEATHER!
WE'RE GOING TO THE ANDERTONS' BRIDGE PARTY TO-NIGHT, DEAR, AND YOU JUST HAVE TIME TO GET DRESSED. THE STUDS ARE ALL IN YOUR SHIRT
NO BID
THREE WITHOUT

## XIV

## INFORMATORY DOUBLING

THERE have been a lot of nasty looks exchanged over the bridge table since the informatory double was invented. Most of them come through one or the other of the partners lacking intelligence or application enough to master a very simple rule.

Every person who pretends to be a bridge player should know—

"When a bid of one, two or three is doubled at the first opportunity, the doubler's partner, not having made a bid, MUST take him out in his longest suit."

Unless you are absolutely positive and then some that you can surely defeat the bidder, you *must* bid your longest suit, even if it's only four to the seven of diamonds. If the bidder has said hearts and your only four-card suit is hearts, then you must say "no trump." You've just got to do something or say something to give your partner a chance to name his suit.

If you have hearts stopped, probably that was

all he wanted to know. If you name a suit in which he is blank, he can name his longest suit, and then it's up to him to struggle out the best he can. At any rate, your partner can't blame what happens on you. You have done what he asked you to.

One reason that fights start over the informatory double is that many persons double on too weak a hand. They don't stop to look before they leap into a double.

An informatory double is supposed to be a call for a partner's longest major suit. Suppose the partner has length only in clubs and diamonds. Before doubling, try to picture what cards are likely to be in your partner's hand. The bidder has given you an idea of what he holds by his bid. You know what is in your own hand. If it was your partner's deal and he passed, the chances are he hasn't much of anything.

So don't make an informatory double without having something more than the equivalent of two aces, without having both major suits well-stopped, and without considering what will happen if your partner is forced to bid a minor suit.

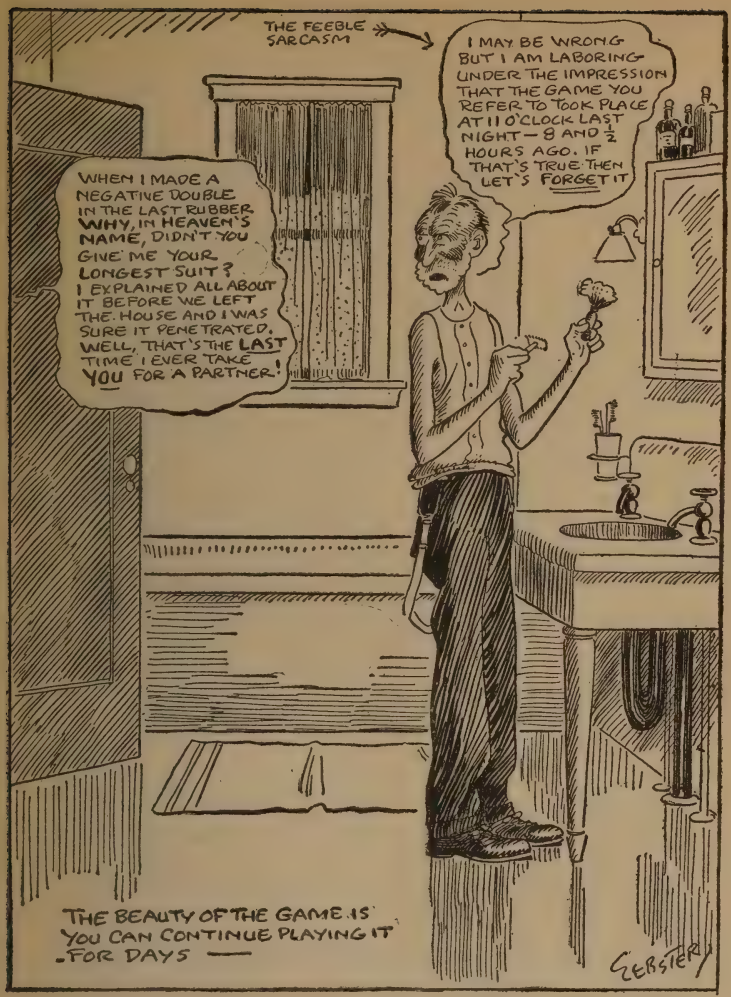
Weak informatory doubles frequently lead to settings. When you double you tell your opponents where the strength lies and gives them an advantage.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
WHY, I THOUGHT I'D GO OUT FOR A LITTLE STROLL - MAYBE DROP IN TH' CLUB AN' PLAY A LITTLE BRIDGE
DID IT EVER OCCUR TO YOU THAT I MIGHT LIKE TO GO OUT SOME EVENING?
DO YOU THINK I ENJOY SITTING HERE ALONE NIGHT AFTER NIGHT LOOKING AT FOUR WALLS?
I HAVEN'T SEEN A MOVIE IN TWO WEEKS! YOU DON'T SEEM TO CARE HOW LONESOME AND DULL IT IS FOR ME! THERE'S A GOOD PICTURE AT THE QUEEN TONIGHT...
WHY, GERTIE, I DIDN'T THINK YOU MINDED STAYING HOME ALONE BUT IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT IT I WON'T GO OUT. I'LL STAY RIGHT HERE WITH YOU
HO-HUM! THINK I'LL TURN IN. IF YOU SIT UP AND READ I HOPE YOU'LL BE AS QUIET AS POSSIBLE AND NOT KEEP ME AWAKE. GOO' NIGHT!
EGBERT

Very often, if you just kept quiet, instead of doubling, you would defeat the bid.

The best advice on the informatory double is—

Be mighty careful when you do it.


THE FEEBLE SARCASM
I MAY BE WRONG BUT I AM LABORING UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GAME YOU REFER TO TOOK PLACE AT 11 O'CLOCK LAST NIGHT — 8 AND ½ HOURS AGO. IF THAT'S TRUE THEN LET'S FORGET IT
WHEN I MADE A NEGATIVE DOUBLE IN THE LAST RUBBER WHY, IN HEAVEN'S NAME, DIDN'T YOU GIVE ME YOUR LONGEST SUIT? I EXPLAINED ALL ABOUT IT BEFORE WE LEFT THE HOUSE AND I WAS SURE IT PENETRATED. WELL, THAT'S THE LAST TIME I EVER TAKE YOU FOR A PARTNER!
THE BEAUTY OF THE GAME IS YOU CAN CONTINUE PLAYING IT FOR DAYS —
GEBSTER

## XV

## THE HAND-HOG

One of the most unpleasant animals ever encountered in the bridge game is the hand-hog.

Generally you can recognize him by the defiant gleam in his eye as he picks up his cards. You can see that he is determined to play every hand, no matter how good cards his partner holds.

You bid one spade. He goes two clubs. You haven't a club in your hand, and have four honors in spades to six and an outside ace. Of course you bid two spades. He goes three clubs. You go three spades. He gives his chair a hitch, closes his lips tightly, gives you a defiant look, and bids four clubs.

Duty to yourself, to your knowledge of the game, to your precious four-spade honors, to your certainty of going game, demands that you bid four spades. He gives you another angry look of warning and shouts "FIVE CLUBS" and in despair you let him have it. Generally, with the help of your wonderful

hand, he manages to just make game, and preens himself over it. Sometimes he gets set.

The worst part of it is: the hand-hog is often your own husband.

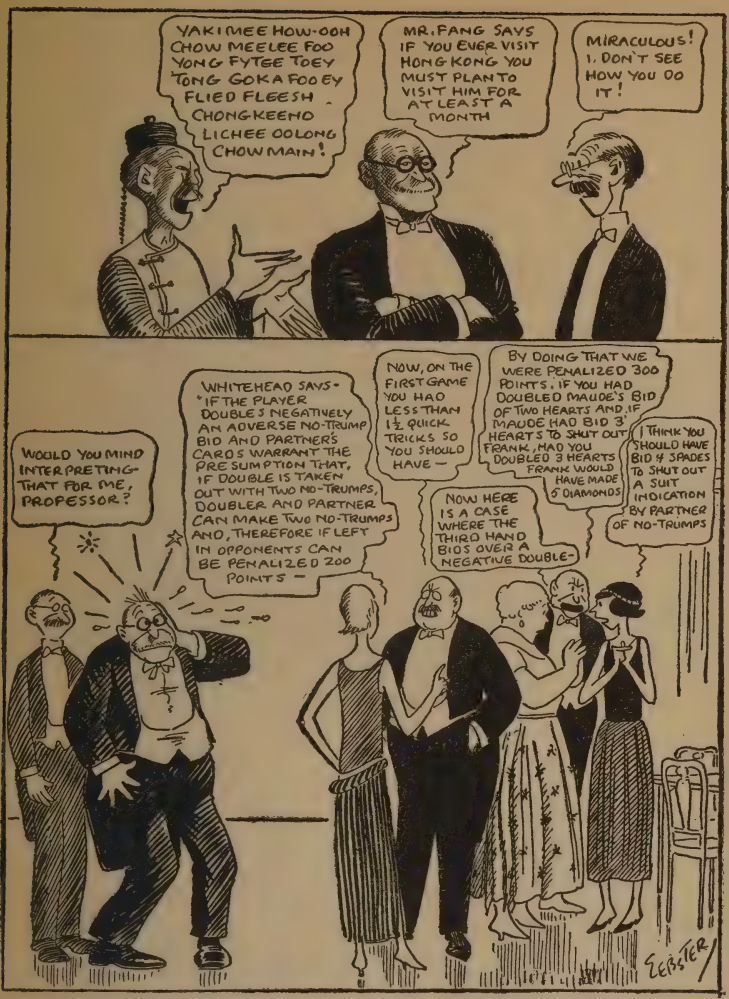
Some husbands, otherwise respectable, good providers, willing to put on Tuxedos without grumbling, when they have their wives for partners, simply will not allow the poor women to play a hand if they can help it.

There's no cure for a hand-hog except going to Reno.

The only way to endure them is to sit tight, and never tell them if you have all the aces and kings in your hand. No matter what you hold, a hand-hog will not let you do the playing.

If you find you are married to a hand-hog, don't play cards with him. If you are not married to him, don't ever play cards with him again.

Hand-hogs are not only unpleasant partners, but expensive luxuries.


YAKIMEE HOW-OOH CHOW MEELEE FOO YONG FYTEE TOEY 'TONG GOKA FOO EY FLIED FLEESH CHONG KEEMO LICHEE OOLONG CHOW MAIN!
MR. FANG SAYS IF YOU EVER VISIT HONG KONG YOU MUST PLAN TO VISIT HIM FOR AT LEAST A MONTH
MIRACULOUS! I DON'T SEE HOW YOU DO IT!
WOULD YOU MIND INTERPRETING THAT FOR ME, PROFESSOR?
WHITEHEAD SAYS- "IF THE PLAYER DOUBLES NEGATIVELY AN ADVERSE NO-TRUMP BID AND PARTNER'S CARDS WARRANT THE PRESUMPTION THAT, IF DOUBLE IS TAKEN OUT WITH TWO NO-TRUMPS, DOUBLER AND PARTNER CAN MAKE TWO NO-TRUMPS AND, THEREFORE IF LEFT IN OPPONENTS CAN BE PENALIZED 200 POINTS —
NOW, ON THE FIRST GAME YOU HAD LESS THAN 1½ QUICK-TRICKS SO YOU SHOULD HAVE —
BY DOING THAT WE WERE PENALIZED 300 POINTS. IF YOU HAD DOUBLED MAUDE'S BID OF TWO HEARTS AND IF MAUDE HAD BID 3 HEARTS TO SHUT OUT FRANK, HAD YOU DOUBLED 3 HEARTS FRANK WOULD HAVE MADE 5 DIAMONDS
NOW HERE IS A CASE WHERE THE THIRD HAND BIDS OVER A NEGATIVE DOUBLE-
I THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE BID 4 SPADES TO SHUT OUT A SUIT INDICATION BY PARTNER OF NO-TRUMPS
EBSTER

## XVI

## ABOUT THIS LUCK THING

One of the most distinguished bridge players I know insists that there is no such thing as luck, and asserts that he has no superstitions, yet every time, when he wins the cut, he'll change to the winning direction. Once when I twitted him about it, he said:

"That isn't superstition. That's just plain fact."

And it is a fact. There are times when the players who sit east and west will win every rubber. At other times the north and south players will be consistent winners.

Sometimes the luck seems to follow the cards. The holders of the red cards will be the big winners. At other times luck will seem to follow a certain player, no matter where he sits, which cards he uses, or who is his partner.

Bridge players have all sorts of theories about luck. A distinguished artist I know maintains that everything in the universe runs in rhythm. If you

are in rhythm with the fall of the cards, you will win. So firmly does he believe this theory that if he was sitting with his feet crossed, and was winning, he would not change his position even if his feet went to sleep, for fear of getting out of rhythm.

Frequently, too, you will hear players bewail their luck—"Did you ever see anyone who holds such bad cards as I do?" Often, too, people will say of a player that he or she is "a wonderful holder."

As a matter of fact, if a record were kept for a given period it would be found that everybody holds about the same average of aces and kings.

If four players, fairly equally matched, play a series of rubbers, the difference in their score can nearly always be traced to errors they have made, overbidding, bad leads, doubling at the wrong time.

When you hear a person say, "I'm a bad holder," it nearly always means he's a bad player.

Luck may run in a certain direction for a time, the red cards may win for a time, but in the long run, everybody holds about equal cards.

Good players lose less when they have bad cards, and win more when they have good cards—and that's about all there really is to bridge luck.

WILL YOU MAKE A FOURTH AT BRIDGE, MR.- AH- I DON'T BELIEVE WE'VE EVER MET. MY NAME'S BOUNDER
MY NAME IS KALLOW-WILBUR H. KALLOW. I DON'T PLAY BRIDGE VERY WELL
NONSENSE! I'LL BET YOU PLAY A BETTER GAME THAN TH' REST OF US. YOU'RE JUST A SHRINKING LIL VIOLET - HAW! HAW!
NO, REALLY I'M A POOR PLAYER
I'VE NOTICED THAT EVERY MAN WHO KNOCKS HIS GAME ALWAY TURNS OUT TO BE A SHARK
I GIVE YOU MY WORD OF HONOR I'M NOT A SHARK, MY WIFE SAYS I'M ABSOLUTELY ROTTEN AT BRIDGE
YOUR WIFE SAYS YOU'RE A ROTTEN PLAYER, EH? HAW! HAW! THA'S GOOD! WHY, EVERY MAN IS A ROTTEN PLAYER TO HIS WIFE!
WELL, I THINK IT'S TRUE IN MY CASE
I'M AFRAID I'LL SPOIL YOUR GAME. I'M REALLY A DUB AT IT
NOT A CHANCE! WE'RE ALL POOR PLAYERS. YOU AND I WILL BE PARTNERS IF THAT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL A LITTLE MORE COMFORTABLE
EEBSTER
SAY, YOU —!!-☆- FATHEAD! I DISCARDED A SEVEN OF CLUBS! DOESN'T THAT MEAN ANYTHING IN YOUR YOUNG LIFE? ANYONE BUT AN IDIOT WOULD KNOW THAT I WANTED A CLUB RETURNED! WAKE UP AND TRY TO DISPLAY A LITTLE INTELLIGENCE IF ANY!

YOU LIL RASCAL! YOU'RE KIND O' FOND OF YOUR OLD MAN - WHAT? WELL, MY FEELING FOR YOU WOULDN'T EXACTLY COME UNDER THE HEAD OF HATRED. SOME WIFE I'VE GOT, HORACE
YOU SWEET OLD THING! LET ME FIX YOUR TIE. I DON'T SEE HOW YOU EVER GOT ALONG BEFORE YOU HAD ME TO LOOK AFTER YOU
I NEVER EXPECTED TO LIVE TO SEE ANOTHER COUPLE AS HAPPY AS WE ARE, DEAREST
THEY'RE NOT, DARLING. THEY ONLY THINK THEY ARE. WELL, COME ON - THE TABLE IS ALL READY FOR US
DIDN'T YOU SEE ME PLAY A COME-ON? THEN WHY, IN HEAVEN'S NAME, DIDN'T YOU LEAD ME A SPADE? DON'T YOU USE YOUR HEAD AT ALL? YOU HAD NO BUSINESS GOING TO 4 DIAMONDS IN THE FIRST PLACE!
THAT WILL BE ABOUT ALL FROM YOU! I LET THE KING GO BY BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT THE LEAD TO COME FROM DUMMY! IF YOU HAVEN'T INTELLIGENCE ENOUGH TO SEE IT THAT'S YOUR FAULT!
I DON'T CARE A RAP WHAT YOU SAY! THAT WAS A STUPID PLAY! YOU LOST YOUR ACE - THAT'S THE ANSWER
WHAT IF I DIDN'T LEAD YOU A SPADE? ARE YOU PERFECT? I NOTICE YOU'RE NOT GETTING ROUND SHOULDERED CARRYING AROUND YOUR BRAIN PAN! I DIDN'T WANT TO PLAY WITH YOU ANYWAY!
IS THAT SO?
YES, THAT'S SO!
LEASTER

## XVII

## FREAK HANDS

FOUR people make up a table of bridge. There are in each pack of cards four of the aces, kings, queens, and jacks. So an average hand contains one of each. There are four suits, so the average hand of thirteen cards contains three cards of three of the suits, and four of the others.

But it is seldom that each of the four players has an average hand. Whenever that happens, nobody is likely to make a bid. Most of the bidding is done on five-card or six-card suits, which are common.

Frequently one of the players will have a freak hand, seven or eight of one suit, and singletons or none in others.

Sometimes a hand will be a two-suiter, with five or six spades, and five or six diamonds.

Two-suiters and freak hands often lead to unusually high bidding, but it is well to remember that when the cards are so distributed that you have a freak hand, one of your opponents is likely to have

a freak hand, made up of the suits in which you are short.

When a two-suiter has been indicated by the bidding, it is dangerous indeed to make a business double. Under such circumstances aces that you counted as sure tricks are likely to be trumped on the first round.

Freak hands, too, are responsible for "shut-out bids," which someone once defined as "bidding four of the suit of which your partner has none."

Shut-out bids are dynamite except in the hands of very good players. Always consider before making a shut-out bid, what will happen:

If your partner is void in the suit you bid.

If your opponents overbid you in another suit.

Before you make a shut-out bid, count your losing tricks—and don't rely on your partner for anything, and bid the full strength of your hand at once.

GEORGE, DEAR, YOU PLAYED PERFECT BRIDGE ALL EVENING! YOU'VE ALWAYS PLAYED A BRILLIANT GAME BUT THIS EVENING YOU OUTDID YOURSELF. THE FEW TIMES YOU WERE SET MY STUPID BIDDING WAS ENTIRELY TO BLAME. YOU'RE A MARVEL AND I'M PROUD OF YOU!
WHY, HELEN, I PLAYED LIKE A DUB! IT WAS YOUR PLAYING THAT PULLED US THROUGH. YOU REALLY PLAYED A FLAWLESS GAME FROM START TO FINISH. WORK, FOSTER, FERGOSON OR ANY OF THE EXPERTS COULDN'T HAVE PLAYED BETTER
DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?
HUSBAND AND WIFE
A PICTURE DRAWN ENTIRELY FROM IMAGINATION

## XVIII

## ABOUT SIGNALS

In most parts of Europe when they play bridge, they do not use signals. Each player leads whatever he feels like, without regard to what his partner wants him to do.

Every once in a while, here in America, you run across a player who seems to like the European method, and simply will not pay attention to your signals.

Sometimes it is just plain carelessness. You discard an eight of spades, and sit back hoping for your partner to lead through the king-jack of spades in dummy. Instead he leads clubs.

Being only human, you are apt to make a wry face. Then he gets a worried look, and says:

"I'm sorry, I didn't notice your first discard."

There's only one kind of a partner worse than that—the one who always believes his opponent rather than his partner.

He makes an opening lead of a king of clubs. You put on an eight, inviting him to come on. Fourth hand, having a lot of clubs, carelessly drops on a jack. Your partner falls for it and leads another suit, and you having had but two clubs never do get a chance to get in your little trumps.

This sort of partner often throws you, too, when the dealer has bid a no-trump. You, sitting fourth hand, bid two diamonds. Your only purpose in bidding is because that is the only suit you want led to you. The dealer, with only the ace of diamonds, takes a chance, and goes two no-trumps. Then your partner, confound him, terrified and intimidated, refuses to lead your suit.

To play successful bridge you *must* watch for your partner's signals. If he discards an unnecessarily high card in any suit, lead him that suit.

Trust your partner and you'll win more rubbers.

THE EXPERT
WHEN YOU LEAD THE SEVEN OF DIAMONDS YOUR PARTNER HAVING THE NINE AND KING NATURALLY ASSUMED YOU HAD THE EIGHT, TEN, JACK AND QUEEN. YOU SHOULD HAVE LED HIM THE KING OF SPADES
WHEN MR. WORMOIL DISCARDED THE TREY OF CLUBS YOU MUST HAVE KNOWN HE HAD FOUR HEARTS TO THE KING
ON THE SECOND HAND OF THE FIRST RUBBER I NOTICED YOU DISCARDED THE SIX OF CLUBS ON THE SECOND HEART LEAD. THE EIGHT OF CLUBS WAS THE ONLY HIGHER CARD OUT. IF YOU HAD HELD YOUR SIX YOU WOULD HAVE MADE BOTH YOUR FOUR AND DEUCE OF CLUBS GOOD
ON THE FIRST HAND OF THE THIRD RUBBER YOU HELD THE JACK, TEN, NINE, DEUCE OF HEARTS, THE KING, QUEEN, DEUCE OF CLUBS. THE EIGHT, SEVEN, TREY OF DIAMONDS AND THE NINE, SIX, FOUR OF SPADES. YOU LEAD YOUR FOURTH BEST IN HEARTS. YOU SHOULD HAVE LED THE JACK
BY THE WAY, PROFESSOR, HOW MUCH DID YOU WIN THIS EVENING?
I LOST $48.50
I CLEANED UP AN EVEN $50.00. WELL, DON'T GET DISCOURAGED, PROFESSOR. I LOSE MYSELF NOW AND THEN

## XIX

## TRICKY PLAYERS

It pays to make a study of the kind of game played by each individual you are likely to be pitted against at bridge. Some players are obvious, playing almost mechanically, counting up each hand, bidding according to rule. They make wonderful partners, but there is little excitement playing either with or against them.

A crafty player adds zest to the game. The tradition of the bridge clubs about a player of this sort runs to this effect:

He was sitting fourth-hand, and the dealer had bid no trump. The crafty player had seven diamonds headed by the ace-king-queen-jack, and also the ace of clubs alone.

Did he bid the diamonds? Not he. He bid two clubs, although he had only the singleton ace. The dealer, who had the four other club honors in his hand, promptly went two no-trumps. The crafty

player doubled the two no-trumps. The dealer redoubled.

The partner of the crafty player led him the club he had called for and then he proceeded to make his seven diamonds tricks, setting the bidder 600 points.

To be a crafty player, however, requires expert knowledge of the game. When an amateur tries unusual methods he usually comes to grief.

A crafty player sometimes will deduce from the bidding that both his opponents are short of hearts, and without enough strength in hearts to really warrant a bid, will put in a heart bid just to drive his opponents up to a point where he can set them.

He'll watch the fall of the cards and finesse with a nine-spot and get away with it.

One of his favorite tricks is the backward finesse—when he has the ace of a suit in his hand, and the queen is in dummy, he'll lead up to the queen, and sometimes in this way he'll trap a guarded king.

But crafty players always run the risk of arousing their partner's wrath. Sometimes when they make a phony bid to deceive their opponents, their own partners take them seriously.

Don't be too crafty.

OH, MADGE, HOW DO YOU LIKE MY NEW FUR COAT?
IT'S PERFECTLY LOVELY! TURN AROUND AND LET'S SEE HOW IT LOOKS IN BACK
WELL, I HOPE YOU BOUGHT IT AT A RELIABLE PLACE. SO MANY SHOPS MISREPRESENT THEIR FURS
I'VE BEEN TOLD NO ONE SHOULD BUY FURS WITHOUT TAKING ALONG AN EXPERT. IT'S SO EASY TO FOOL THE ORDINARY BUYER.
I UNDERSTAND THEY CAN IMITATE ANY FUR WITH PLAIN, EVERYDAY RABBIT. THEY CAN EVEN MAKE A TIGER SKIN OUT OF IT THAT WOULD FOOL ANYONE
I'M NOT INSINUATING, MY DEAR, THAT YOUR COAT IS RABBIT. IT MAY BE MOLE AS YOU THINK IT IS. I'M JUST TELLING YOU WHAT I'VE HEARD ABOUT FURS. I'M SURE I'M GOOD ENOUGH FRIEND OF YOURS TO SPEAK FRANKLY
LET'S PHONE JIM AND MADGE AND HAVE 'EM COME OVER AN' PLAY BRIDGE THIS EVENING
DON'T YOU EVER MENTION MADGE GABOON'S NAME TO ME AGAIN AS LONG AS YOU LIVE! I HATE HER!
EBBSTER

# XX

## SOME PITFALLS TO AVOID

If you consistently lose more often than you win at bridge, there's only one explanation of it—you're not a good player.

You frequently hear people say: "I never have any luck at cards," or "I'm a very poor holder." All that those phrases mean is that the person speaking is a poor player, and generally is so conceited about his game that he doesn't know it.

If four people played bridge four hours a day for a hundred days and an accurate record was kept of the hands each one held, you would find very little difference in the distribution af aces and kings. You would find, however, considerable difference in their scores. In duplicate games where forty people play a series of boards where all have the same hands there are sometimes widely varying scores.

If you check back over an evening's play you will find that your losings are largely attributable to your own errors, overconfidence in bidding, optimism in

doubling, or slipping a trick here and there that you might have had.

In order to avoid some of the pitfalls that make you a loser, here are some things to remember:

*Be Quick at Arithmetic.*

Always keep count of how many trumps have been played. Always notice the pips on your partner's first lead and try to discover from what he led. When it comes to deciding which of your opponents to throw the lead to, stop and count up how many cards they have left in the suit they bid. If you are good at arithmetic and have listened carefully to the bidding you ought always when it gets down to the last three or four cards to know with fair certainty what each opponent still holds in his hand.

*Be a Conservative Bidder.*

Never open the bidding with a king-jack suit or a suit headed by the queen, even if you have seven of them. Wait for the second round.

Of course, if you have compensating tricks, all the other aces and kings, you can sometimes take a chance, but even then surprises may happen. The trumps may all be bunched against you.

Never bid a no-trump when you have a good suit bid in your hand. No trumps are the hardest to make.

WHAT! YOU DON'T PLAY BRIDGE? TOO BAD! TOO BAD! GREAT GAME AND A WONDERFUL RELAXATION. OUGHT TO TAKE IT UP
I'VE PLAYED ONCE OR TWICE
I COME HOME FROM THE OFFICE AT NIGHT ALL FAGGED OUT AND AFTER TWO OR THREE SNAPPY RUBBERS OF BRIDGE I FEEL LIKE A NEW MAN. IT'S MIGHTY RESTFUL
I NEED SOMETHING LIKE THAT. I'M UNDER AN AWFUL STRAIN ALL DAY
YOU'VE PLAYED OFTEN ENOUGH TO APPRECIATE THIS PARTICULAR HAND. IT HAPPENED LAST MONTH - ON THE 12TH I THINK. MY WIFE HELD THE ACE, TEN, FIVE AND DEUCE OF HEARTS, THE ACE AND QUEEN OF CLUBS, THE ACE, SEVEN, SIX AND DEUCE OF DIAMONDS AND THE NINE, FOUR AND THREE OF SPADES
BILL DOOFUSS HELD THE KING, QUEEN, JACK, EIGHT AND FOUR OF HEARTS, THE JACK, TEN AND SIX OF CLUBS, THE EIGHT AND THREE OF DIAMONDS AND THE EIGHT, SIX AND FIVE OF SPADES. HIS WIFE HELD THE SEVEN, SIX AND THREE OF HEARTS, THE NINE, EIGHT, FIVE AND THREE OF CLUBS —
NOT TH' THREE OF CLUBS TOO! MY G - - -
- THE KING AND QUEEN OF DIAMONDS AND THE JACK, TEN, SEVEN AND DEUCE OF SPADES. I HELD THE NINE OF HEARTS, THE KING, SEVEN, FOUR AND DEUCE OF CLUBS, THE JACK, TEN, NINE, FIVE AND FOUR OF DIAMONDS AND THE ACE, KING, QUEEN OF SPADES. MY WIFE DEALT AND BID NO TRUMP AND WE ALL PASSED. BILL LEAD THE KING OF HEARTS AND —
OH, GLADYS! I'M NOT DEAD ON YOU AM I? I HAVEN'T HIT YOU SINCE I WENT THROUGH THE CENTER WICKET
EBSTER

Never, when you are fouth-hand, open the bidding unless you are sure of going game. Never bid a fourth hand no-trumper if you can possibly bid a suit.

*Be Careful About Doubling.*

Never double three clubs or three diamonds. Even if you make the double, it isn't worth the risk of doubling your opponents into a game.

Never make a business double except on the sure tricks in your own hand. Your partner may be a liar, and if he lied to you by his bidding, you may get set.

Never make an informatory double without stopping to consider what your partner is likely to bid. Figure out what you will do if he bids your weakest suit and one of your opponents double.

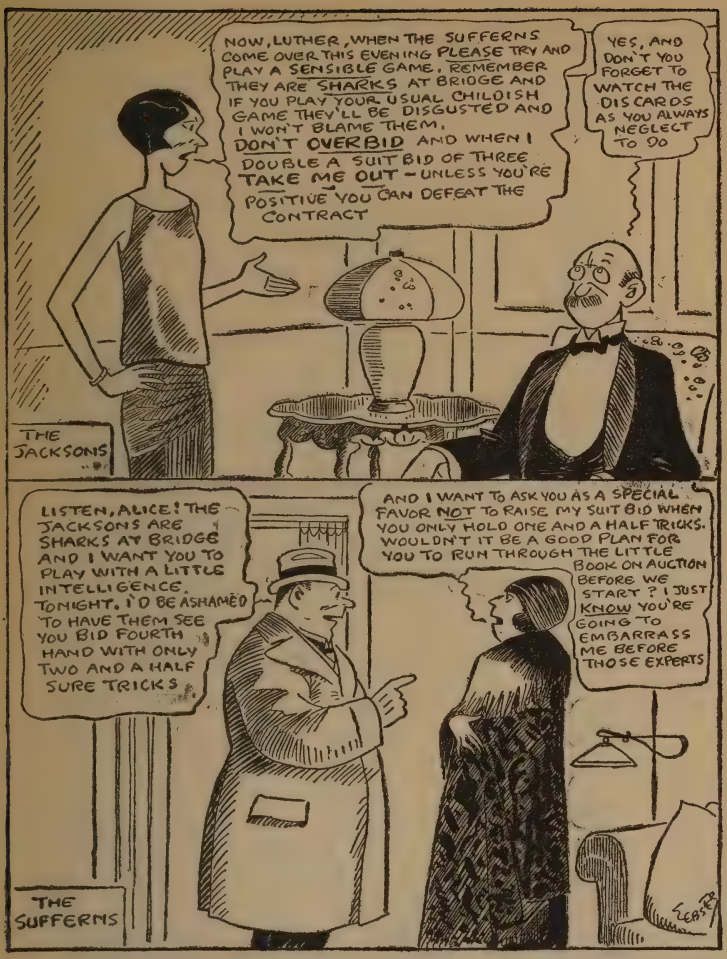
Never make an informatory double without having *both* the major suits well-stopped, for the informatory double is generally recognized as a call for your partner's longest major suit, provided he has one of four cards.

*Keep Quiet with Bad Cards.*

Don't, when you are having bad hands, try to force your luck. Don't bid on six to a queen of something hoping to drive your opponents up. They may double and drive you to destruction.

Don't bid to save game. Don't bid a major suit over an original no-trump. Wait and give your partner a chance.

Anybody who avoids pitfalls here pointed out, if they do not become a good player, will at least lose less.


NOW, LUTHER, WHEN THE SUFFERNS COME OVER THIS EVENING PLEASE TRY AND PLAY A SENSIBLE GAME. REMEMBER THEY ARE SHARKS AT BRIDGE AND IF YOU PLAY YOUR USUAL CHILDISH GAME THEY'LL BE DISGUSTED AND I WON'T BLAME THEM. DON'T OVERBID AND WHEN I DOUBLE A SUIT BID OF THREE TAKE ME OUT - UNLESS YOU'RE POSITIVE YOU CAN DEFEAT THE CONTRACT
YES, AND DON'T YOU FORGET TO WATCH THE DISCARDS AS YOU ALWAYS NEGLECT TO DO
THE JACKSONS
LISTEN, ALICE! THE JACKSONS ARE SHARKS AT BRIDGE AND I WANT YOU TO PLAY WITH A LITTLE INTELLIGENCE. TONIGHT, I'D BE ASHAMED TO HAVE THEM SEE YOU BID FOURTH HAND WITH ONLY TWO AND A HALF SURE TRICKS
AND I WANT TO ASK YOU AS A SPECIAL FAVOR NOT TO RAISE MY SUIT BID WHEN YOU ONLY HOLD ONE AND A HALF TRICKS. WOULDN'T IT BE A GOOD PLAN FOR YOU TO RUN THROUGH THE LITTLE BOOK ON AUCTION BEFORE WE START? I JUST KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO EMBARRASS ME BEFORE THOSE EXPERTS
THE SUFFERNS

## XXI

## UNFORGIVABLE SINS

HAVE you ever been playing bridge with a nicely-gowned woman with manicured hands and permanently waved hair as a partner, and when you have made the lead that seemed best in your judgment, had her all at once set her face in wrath? Have you had her scream across the table at you in shrill, angry tones—

"What did you lead me that diamond for? Didn't you know I wanted to trump a club?"

If you ever have had that sort of experience, you know what I mean by unforgivable sins. People who screech at their partners when something happens they do not like, don't really belong at the bridge table. Husbands and wives are particularly strong on this "why" business. When they cut each other as partners, no wife ever seems able to play to please her husband, and *vice versa.* If they waited to talk about it after they got home it wouldn't be

"NOT SUCH A BAD HAND, PARTNER. I HAD THEIR SPADES STOPPED TWICE AND HERE'S A GOOD LINE OF CLUBS IF YOU CAN CLEAR UP THE SUIT. I WOULD HAVE HESITATED ABOUT GOING TO THREE THOUGH. WHAT DO YOU THINK?"
"SALLY, DID YOU HEAR ABOUT MAUD CALORIE? NO? MY DEAR! SHE WAS LUNCHING WITH A MOVIE ACTOR ONE DAY LAST WEEK AND WHO SHOULD WALK IN AND SIT AT THE NEXT TABLE BUT — "
"ELINOR WORE A STUNNING GOWN, IT HAD A CORSAGE OF WHITE VELVET BEADED WITH CRYSTAL AND A GODET SKIRT OF BLACK SATIN BEADED WITH JET. SHE LOOKED LIKE THE DEVIL IN IT"
"HOW THEY LIVE IS A MYSTERY TO ME. CHARLEY TELLS ME ED CAN'T POSSIBLY MAKE OVER $6,000 A YEAR YET THE DOG STELLA PUTS ON YOU'D THINK THEY WERE MILLIONAIRES OR SOMETHING. THEY BOUGHT A NEW CAR THE OTHER DAY"
"DID YOU SEE HER IN THAT COMEDY THE PINK CORSET? SHE WAS PERFECTLY ADORABLE IN THAT. I DIDN'T CARE FOR HER AT ALL IN THE CROCODILE TEAR. THE LEAD IS IN DUMMY, PARTNER. DO YOU WANT THE 9 OF HEARTS? THAT'S HIGH I THINK."
"I PICKED UP A DARLING TIPTABLE YESTERDAY AT AN AUCTION. IT WOULD COST AT LEAST $50.00 AT ANY DEALER'S AND I GOT IT FOR $6.50. ARE WE SET, PARTNER? TOO BAD, PERHAPS I SHOULD'NT HAVE RAISED YOU BUT I —"
EGBERT

so bad. If they even would be as courteous to each other as they are to the rest of the company, it might be forgiven. But even the most loving of couples, over the bridge table jaw at each other and shriek questions back and forth, till one or the other gets angry and breaks up the game.

And that's an unforgivable sin.

There are other players who hold their tongues, who would be horrified if anyone accused them of cheating, who nevertheless manage to express their displeasure at their partner's bidding or leads by wriggling in their seats, by assuming a pained expression.

They're signalling to their partner just as plainly as if they were tramping his toes under the table. Seldom have the other players courage enough to put them out of the game, although that is what ought to be done.

The distress signals in players' faces are another unforgivable sin.

In such a category might also be included many of the petty little tricks many players resort to—peeping into hands if they get a chance, hesitating before playing a card to deceive their opponents, or when they have only a singleton of a suit led, delaying and apparently debating which card they shall

play. It's almost as bad, too, when players vary from the accepted terms of bidding with such phrases as "I kick it" for "I double," "Two spadoodles" for "Two spades," or "I'll venture one no-trump."

In most cases when players use such expressions, they merely are trying to be funny. It does sound funny to a stranger who happens to play with them. He can't help wondering if the phrases they use have a hidden meaning that the partner understands and he doesn't.

If you're going to play bridge, play it with the recognized vocabulary, play it conservatively, and keep your temper.

Remember the game is supposed to be an amusement.

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